

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

3221

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 22 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1976
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Judiciary and Health and Human Services,
to which was referred H.B. No. 1976, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF ELECTIONS,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Office of Elections to annually request funding for the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee; and
- (2) Appropriate funds to the Office of Elections Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee to gather information and provide outreach and voter education services for individuals with accessibility needs.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Disability and Communication Access Board, Statewide Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee, Hawaii Disability Rights Center, and six individuals.

Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services.



Your Committees find that removing barriers for persons with voting accessibility needs increases accessibilities for voters with disabilities through the entire voting process, from registration through casting ballots, and ensures that all individuals have equal access to the voting process. Existing law requires the State Office of Elections and each county election office to address accessibility and ways to remove barriers. Your Committees believe that understanding the unique needs of each community statewide can provide valuable insight on current and future accessibility issues for voters. This measure will promote greater participation in voting by individuals with access needs who may otherwise be excluded.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting an appropriation amount of \$10,000 for information gathering, outreach, and voter education expenses approved by the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee; and
- (2) Making it effective on July 1, 2024.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Judiciary and Health and Human Services that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1976, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1976, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Judiciary and
Health and Human Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



KARL RHOADS, Chair



